

REVISIONARY NOTES ON THE *LERISTA* (LACERTILIA, SCINCIDAE) OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

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ABSTRACT

Five new species and subspecies are described: *Lerista separanda*, *L. xanthura*, *L. kalumburu*, *L. connivens petersoni* and *L. apoda*. Additional data, mainly distributional, are given for several other taxa. A key is provided for the 29 species and subspecies inhabiting Western Australia.

INTRODUCTION

It is only five years since I revised this genus (Storr, 1972), but so many specimens of *Lerista* have been recently added to our collection that a partial revision is warranted. Described as new are two members of the *elegans* group (*L. separanda* and *L. xanthura*), a close relation of *L. walkeri* and *L. borealis* (namely *L. kalumburu*) and two members of the *bipes* group (*L. connivens petersoni* and *L. apoda*). Because the last-mentioned species is completely limbless and almost blind, a new generic diagnosis is necessary.

It is now possible to redescribe *L. walkeri*, a species formerly unrepresented in our collection. Three other taxa are partially redescribed, viz. *L. m. microtis*, *L. borealis* and *L. nicholli*; and additional locality data are provided for a further 13 species.

All the material cited in this paper is lodged in the Western Australian Museum.

Diagnosis

Small to moderately large, elongate, smooth-scaled cryptozoic or fossorial skinks with fragile tail, minute ear aperture, and limbs (when present) small and widely separated. Forelimb with 1-5 fingers, or reduced to a clawless style or tubercle, or represented merely by a groove, or

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entirely without trace. Hindlimb with 1-5 toes, or reduced to a clawless style, or entirely without trace. No supranasal or postnasal. Prefrontals widely separated or absent. Frontal wider than supraocular region. Frontoparietals paired, or fused to each other, or fused to each other and to interparietal. Parietals in contact behind interparietal. Transversely enlarged nuchals present or absent. Loreals 1 or 2. Eyelid movable (with a transparent disc) or immovable (a spectacle) or absent (eye covered by a transparent ocular scale). Temporals 1+2 or 1+1. Upper labials 4-7, third-last subocular. Midbody scale rows 14-24. Preanals enlarged.

KEY

1.	Digits 5 + 5	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	6
	Digits fewer	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2
2.	Digits 4 + 4	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	7
	Digits fewer	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3
3.	Digits 3 + 3	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	11
	Digits fewer	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	4
4.	Digits 2 + 3	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	12
	Digits fewer	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	5
5.	Digits 2 + 2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	17
	Fingers fewer than 2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	20
6.	Dark upper lateral stripe wider than white midlateral stripe and margined above with white	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	<i>L. microtis microtis</i>
	Dark upper lateral stripe narrower than white midlateral stripe and not margined with white	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	<i>L. microtis arenicola</i>
7.	Eyelid movable	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	<i>L. frosti</i>
	Eyelid immovable	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	8
8.	Dark upper lateral stripe present; supraciliaries 3-4	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	9
	No upper lateral stripe; supraciliaries 5	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	<i>L. xanthura</i>
9.	Nasals forming a median suture	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	10
	Nasals separated	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	<i>L. distinguenda</i>
10.	Back olive brown; midbody scale rows normally 16	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	<i>L. elegans</i>
	Back pinkish buff; midbody scale rows 18...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	<i>L. separanda</i>

11. Eyelid movable; supraoculars 4 *L. terdigitata*
 Eyelid immovable; supraoculars 3 *L. muelleri*
12. Eyelid immovable; midbody scale rows 16... .. *L. lineata*
 Eyelid movable; midbody scale rows 20-24... .. 13
13. Strong ventrolateral keel; temporals 1 + 1... .. *L. planiventralis*
 No ventrolateral keel; temporals 1 + 2 14
14. Dark upper lateral stripe present *L. desertorum*
 No upper lateral stripe 15
15. Frontoparietals fused *L. walkeri*
 Frontoparietals not fused 16
16. Frontoparietals forming a median suture *L. borealis*
 Frontoparietals separated... .. *L. macropisthopus*
17. Frontoparietals fused or forming a median
 suture *L. walkeri*
 Frontoparietals separated or just touching... .. 18
18. Dark upper lateral stripe present *L. picturata picturata*
 No stripes... .. 19
19. Back strongly spotted *L. neander*
 Back not or faintly spotted *L. macropisthopus*
20. Digits 1 + 3 *L. kalumburu*
 Toes fewer than 3 21
21. Digits 1 + 2 22
 Digits fewer 25
22. Dark upper lateral stripe conspicuous 23
 Upper lateral stripe faint or absent 24
23. Dark vertebral stripe present *L. gerrardii*
 No vertebral stripe (only 4 dark dorsal lines)... .. *L. picturata picturata*
24. No upper lateral stripe; nasals usually separ-
 ated; first supraocular contacting frontal;
 supraciliaries 3-5 *L. macropisthopus*
 Dark upper lateral stripe indistinct; nasals
 usually forming a median suture; first supra-
 ocular usually not contacting frontal;
 supraciliaries 1-2 *L. picturata baynesi*
25. Digits 0 + 2 26
 Digits fewer 33
26. Forelimb represented by a clawless style or
 tubercle or groove; prefrontals present; nasals

	usually forming a median suture	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	27
	No trace of forelimb or forelimb groove; no prefrontals; nasals usually separated	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	32
27.	Dark vertebral stripe present	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	28
	No vertebral stripe	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	30
28.	Loreals 2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	29
	Loreal 1 (second fused to prefrontal)	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	<i>L. nichollsi</i>	
29.	Eyelid movable	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	<i>L. connivens connivens</i>	
	Eyelid immovable	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	<i>L. connivens petersoni</i>	
30.	Dark upper lateral stripe conspicuous	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	<i>L. picturata picturata</i>	
	Upper lateral stripe faint or absent	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	31
31.	Frontoparietals and interparietals not fused	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	<i>L. picturata baynesi</i>	
	Frontoparietals and interparietals fused	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	<i>L. lineopunctulata</i>	
32.	Two supraoculars contacting frontal; supra-ciliaries 1 or 2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	<i>L. bipes</i>
	One supraocular contacting frontal; no supra-ciliaries	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	<i>L. labialis</i>
33.	Hindlimb with a digit; prefrontals present	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	34
	Hindlimb a clawless style or completely absent; no prefrontals	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	35
34.	Frontoparietals and interparietal not fused	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	<i>L. picturata baynesi</i>	
	Frontoparietals and interparietal fused	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	<i>L. lineopunctulata</i>	
35.	Hindlimb a clawless style; eyelid movable	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	36
	Hindlimb absent; no eyelid (eye covered by transparent ocular scale)	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	<i>L. apoda</i>	
36.	Labials 6; loreals 2; temporals 1 + 1; one supraciliary	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	<i>L. humphriesi</i>	
	Labials 5; loreal 1; temporals 1 + 2; no supraciliary	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	<i>L. praepedita</i>	

Lerista microtis microtis (Gray)

Revised distribution

Far south of Western Australia: southern half of Darling Range, from Dwellingup south to Collie; south coast from Israelite Bay west nearly to Cape Leeuwin (Scott River).

Partial redescription

Snout-vent length (mm): 22-51 (40.2). Length of appendages etc. (% SVL): foreleg 14-23 (17.1); hindleg 25-35 (29.4); tail 104-134 (117); snout to foreleg 25-36 (29.6). Nuchals 2-4 (3.2). Midbody scale rows 18 or 20 (22 in one specimen). Lamellae under longest toe 18-21 (19.3).

Additional material

South-west Division (W.A.): 5 km E of Dwellingup (40118); 25 km W of Collie (49275); Scott River (49955); Meerup River (47895); Torbay Head (51777); Two Peoples Bay (36382, 44991, 44996).

Eucla Division (W.A.): Rossiter Bay (42590).

Lerista frosti (Zietz)

Additional localities

North-west Division (W.A.): Hancock Gorge, 25 km S of Wittenoom; Marillana.

Eucla Division (W.A.): Mullendunya Tank (32°53'S, 124°35'E).

Lerista distinguenda (Werner)

Additional localities

South-west Division (W.A.): Buntine Reserve; 20 km NE of Dalwallinu; Julimar Forest; Lake Clifton; Dryandra; Tuttanning Reserve; 25 km E of Yornaning (32°54'S, 117°22'E); Dragon Rocks Reserve; Dongolocking Reserve (33°02'S, 117°43'E); 25 km W of Collie; Busselton; Lake Chinocup; Chinocup Reserve, 7 km NE of Pingrup; near Greenshield Soak (E of Pingrup); Lake Magenta; Phillips River, 26 km W of Ravensthorpe; upper Twertup Creek, Fitzgerald National Park; between upper reaches of Perup and Tone Rivers.

Eucla Division (W.A.): W of Point Culver (32°53'S, 124°32'E); Frenchmans Peak; Duke of Orleans Bay.

Lerista elegans (Gray)

Additional localities

South-west Division (W.A.): Houtman Abrolhos (East Wallabi Island); 15 km N of Marchagee; suburbs of Perth (City Beach, Alfred Cove, St James, Queens Park).

Lerista separanda sp. nov.

Holotype

R40268 in Western Australian Museum, collected by Mr W.H. Butler in winter 1971 at Coulomb Point, Western Australia, in 17°21'S, 122°09'E.

Diagnosis

Small slender *Lerista* with digits 4 + 4, eyelid immovable (i.e. a large transparent disc surrounded by an almost complete series of granules). Distinguishable from *L. elegans* by 18 (rather than 16) midbody scale rows, and from *L. distinguenda* by nasals forming a median suture; further distinguishable from both of those species by pale back without dark spots or olive tone but anteriorly with a wide faint vertebral stripe.

Distribution

Dampier Land, west Kimberley.

Description (of holotype, the only available specimen).

Snout-vent length (mm): 30. Length of appendages etc. (% SVL): foreleg 19; hindleg 33; tail 118; snout to foreleg 32.

Nasals forming a moderately long median suture. Prefrontals widely separated. Frontoparietals forming a long median suture; smaller than interparietal. Nuchals 2. Supraoculars 3, first two contacting frontal. Supraciliaries 4, last much the smallest. Upper secondary temporal much the largest; lower secondary much the smallest (on other side, primary temporal broken into two scales subequal to lower secondary). Midbody scale rows 18. Lamellae under longest toe 15-16, slightly compressed and very weakly keeled.

Upper surface pale pinkish buff, each scale finely edged with brown. A brown spot in centre of frontonasal, frontoparietals and interparietal, and a brown median streak on frontal, nape and foreback. Dark brown upper lateral stripe from tip of snout back through orbit to base of tail. Under surface whitish.

Remarks

The holotype was collected under bushes of *Crotalaria cunninghamii* growing at foot of coastal dunes (W.H. Butler, *pers. comm.*).

Lerista xanthura sp. nov.

Holotype

R40174 in Western Australian Museum, collected by Messrs J. Dell and G. Chapman on 25 May 1971 at 7 km SW of the Pollock Hills, Western Australia, in 22° 54'S, 127° 30'E.

Diagnosis

Small slender *Lerista* with digits 4 + 4, eyelid immovable (i.e. a large transparent disc surrounded by an almost complete series of granules), and no stripes or spots. Further distinguishable from *L. elegans*, *L. distinguenda* and *L. separanda* by 5 (rather than 3 or 4) supraciliaries and long tail (bright yellow in life).

Distribution

Gibson Desert (far eastern interior of Western Australia).

Description (of holotype, the only available specimen)

Snout-vent length (mm): 36.5. Length of appendages etc. (% SVL): foreleg 16; hindleg 30; tail 142; snout to foreleg 31.

Nasals forming a moderately long suture. Prefrontals widely separated. Frontoparietals forming a moderately long suture; smaller than interparietal. Nuchals 1-2. Supraoculars 3, first two contacting frontal. Supraciliaries 5, third and fourth largest, second and fifth smallest. Upper secondary temporal much the largest; lower secondary much the smallest. Midbody scale rows 18. Lamellae under longest toe 15-16, compressed and weakly keeled.

Upper surface pale pinkish buff, each scale finely edged with brown. Lower surface whitish.

Remarks

The holotype was found at a depth of *ca* 15 cm when the collectors were excavating the moist sand beneath a clump of spinifex on a spinifex-dominated sandplain (John Dell, *pers. comm.*).

Lerista muelleri (Fischer)

Additional localities

North-west Division (W.A.): Yardie Creek (the watercourse); Cockeraga River; Junction Well, upper Oakover River; Minnie Creek; Yinnietharra;

Weedarrah; Callagiddy; Errabiddy; 169 km NNE of Meekatharra; Mileura; Meekatharra; Billabalong; 20 km E of Paynes Find.

South-west Division (W.A.): Four-ways, Kalbarri National Park; Buntine Reserve; 20 km NE of Dalwallinu; Waddouring Water Reserve (S of Bencubbin).

Eastern Division (W.A.): 7 km W of Talawana; Well 11, Canning Stock Route; 7 km SW of Walyahmoning Rock; Marvel Loch; 48 km S of Widgiemooltha; Kanandah (N of Naretha).

Eucla Division (W.A.): 48 km N of Norseman.

South Australia: Mern Merna.

Lerista lineata Bell

Additional localities

South-west Division (W.A.): suburbs of Perth (Alfred Cove, Manning, Wilson, Queens Park).

Lerista planiventralis (Lucas & Frost)

Additional localities

North-west Division (W.A.): Carrarang.

South-west Division (W.A.): 5 km W of Padbury (30°10'S, 115°04'E).

Lerista borealis Storr

Diagnosis

Small *Lerista* with digits 2 + 3, eyelid movable, frontoparietals paired and forming a median suture, and pattern almost absent. Distinguishable from *L. walkeri* by large last supraciliary (subequal to third and fourth) and nasals not forming a median suture; it is also smaller, paler and less heavily spotted, and has longer limbs and more subdigital lamellae.

Distribution

Hills of the Kimberleys (far northern Western Australia).

Partial redescription

Snout-vent length (mm): 30-51 (44.9). Length of appendages etc. (% SVL): foreleg 8-11 (8.6); hindleg 16-21 (17.5); tail 114 (one specimen); snout to foreleg 27-28 (28.0).

Nasals narrowly separated (2 specimens) or just touching (3 specimens). Prefrontals widely separated. Frontoparietals forming a short to long median suture; shorter than interparietal. Nuchals 0-3 (2.5). Supraoculars 3, first two contacting frontal. Supraciliaries 5, last three largest, second smallest. Upper secondary temporal much the largest; lower secondary smallest. Midbody scale rows 20-22 (20.8). Lamellae under longest toe 10-13 (11.4).

Remarks

This species is closer to *L. walkeri* than I previously believed. Two characters formerly used for distinguishing them have proved to be not fully diagnostic, viz. condition of frontoparietals and number of toes.

Additional material

Kimberley Division (W.A.): Lake Argyle (52173-4).

Lerista walkeri (Boulenger)

Diagnosis

Moderately small *Lerista* with digits 2 + 2 (locally 2 + 3), eyelid movable, frontonasals fused or paired, and dorsal pattern of dark dots. Distinguishable from *L. borealis* by small last supraciliary (much smaller than third and fourth), long suture between nasals, darker and more heavily spotted coloration, greater size, shorter limbs and fewer subdigital lamellae.

Distribution

Coasts of north-west and west Kimberley from Prince Regent River south-west to Roebuck Bay; also Condillac and Augustus Islands.

Description (based on Prince Regent River series)

Snout-vent length (mm): 41-63 (55.7). Length of appendages etc. (% SVL): foreleg 5-8 (5.8); hindleg 10-15 (11.6); tail 75-110 (90.8); snout to foreleg 22-28 (24.9). Digits 2 + 2.

Nasals forming a long median suture. Prefrontals widely separated. Frontoparietals fused (7 specimens) or paired with long to moderately long median suture (6 specimens); shorter than interparietal. Nuchals 0-4 (2.2). Supraoculars normally 3, with first two contacting frontal (on one side of R46726 first and second supraoculars fused to each other and to second supraciliary). Supraciliaries normally 5; third and fourth largest, second and fifth smallest. Upper secondary temporal much the largest; lower secondary smallest. Midbody scale rows 22. Lamellae under longer toe 6-10 (8.2).

Upper surface dark greyish brown with a small obscure blackish brown spot in centre of each dorsal scale; spots aligning longitudinally and becoming larger and darker distally and extending to flanks and under tail. Ventrals whitish, fuzzily edged with greyish brown. Under digits grey.

Geographic variation

The single specimen from Augustus Island differs in having digits 2 + 3, shorter limbs (foreleg 4 and hindleg 7% of SVL) and browner, less greyish coloration. Its frontoparietals are fused.

Material

Kimberley Division (W.A.): Prince Regent River Reserve in 15°07'S, 125°33'E (46878, 46881), in 15°28'S, 125°29'E (46723-7), and in 15°34'S, 125°25'E (46886, 46890-1, 46953-5); Augustus Island (41299).

Lerista kalumburu sp. nov.

Holotype

R27915 in Western Australian Museum, collected by Mr W.H. Butler in summer 1965-66 at Kalumburu, Western Australia, in 14°18'S, 126°38'E.

Diagnosis

Small obscurely spotted *Lerista* with digits 1 + 3, eyelid movable, and frontoparietals separated. Further distinguishable from *L. walkeri* and *L. borealis* by smaller frontoparietals, larger primary temporal and fewer rows of midbody scales; it is also less heavily spotted under the tail, and the supraciliaries are less disparate in size.

Distribution

Vicinity of Napier Broome Bay, north Kimberley.

Description (of holotype, the only available specimen)

Snout-vent length (mm): 50. Length of appendages etc. (% SVL): foreleg 2; hindleg 13; tail 73; snout to foreleg 25.

Nasals forming a long median suture. Prefrontals widely separated. Frontoparietals separated, very much smaller than interparietal. Nuchals 2-3. Supraoculars 3, first two contacting frontal. Supraciliaries 5; first and fourth largest; second, third and fifth smallest. Upper secondary temporal largest; lower secondary much the smallest. Midbody scale rows 18. Lamellae under longest toe 8-9.

Upper surface brown, each dorsal scale with a central brown spot; spots on flanks tending to coalesce into obscure longitudinally orientated lines. Lips pale brown barred with dark brown. Under surface whitish, sparsely spotted with pale brown towards tip of tail.

Remarks

The above specimen was briefly described in Storr (1972: 65). The additional material now available of its close relatives makes it reasonably clear that *kalumburu* is not a variant of either *L. walkeri* or *L. borealis*.

Lerista macropisthopus (Werner)

Revised distribution

Western arid and semiarid zones of Western Australia: north to the Tropic; south to the central wheatbelt (Narembeen); west to Shark Bay, the mouth of the Murchison River and Wongan Hills; and east to the Robertson Range and Menzies district (Jeedamya).

Remarks

In its obscurely spotted and streaked dorsal and upper lateral scales, our northernmost specimen (R42282 from Coondra Coondra Spring in the Robertson Range) approaches *L. neander* from Mt Newman (130 km to WSW). In other respects it agrees with *L. macropisthopus*, viz. number of toes (3) and nuchals (3/4), nature of first supraciliary (not fused to supraocular), and relative length of hindleg (15.5% of SVL). Nevertheless *L. neander* (like *L. desertorum*) could well prove to be only subspecifically distinct from *L. macropisthopus*.

Additional localities

North-west Division (W.A.): Mooka, Kennedy Range; Woodleigh; Overlander Road House (Shark Bay turnoff).

South-west Division (W.A.): Trayning Reserve, 15 km ENE of Kununoppin.

Eastern Division (W.A.): Coondra Coondra Spring, 40 km NE of Jiggalong.

Lerista desertorum (Sternfeld)

Revised distribution

Eastern arid zone of Western Australia: north to lat. 25°S; south to 31°S; west to the Carnarvon Range, Albion Downs, Glenorn and Randells;

and east into the south-west of the Northern Territory (and presumably into north-western South Australia).

Additional localities

Eastern Division (W.A.): Carnarvon Range (25°17'S, 120°42'E); Agnew; Linden.

Lerista lineopunctulata (Duméril & Bibron)

Additional localities

North-west Division (W.A.): Dirk Hartog I.; Carrarang.

South-west Division (W.A.): mouth of Greenough River; Guilderton; suburbs of Perth (Wanneroo, Lake Gngangara, City Beach).

Lerista nichollsi (Loveridge)

Diagnosis

Small slender *Lerista* with digits 0 + 2, forelimb groove minute, eyelid immovable, frontoparietals and interparietal fused, dark brown upper lateral stripe and brown vertebral stripe. Distinguishable from both subspecies of *L. connivens* by lesser size, fusion of second loreal to prefrontal, narrower and more sharply defined vertebral stripe, and fewer rows of midbody scales. Further distinguishable from *L. c. connivens* by immovable eyelid, more numerous nuchals, and relatively longer hindleg.

Distribution

Mid-west coast and hinterland of Western Australia from the Gascoyne south to the lower Murchison and upper Greenough, east to Mileura and Dalgaranga.

Partial redescription

Snout-vent length (mm): 31-61 (51.5). Length of appendages etc. (% SVL): hindleg 14-20 (17.2); snout to foreleg groove 21-26 (23.1).

Nasals forming a short to moderately long median suture. Prefrontals widely separated. Nuchals 1-3 (2.2). Supraoculars 3, first two contacting frontal. Supraciliaries 0 + 1, 0 + 2, 1 + 1, 1 + 2, 3 or 4. Midbody scale rows 20 (occasionally 18). Lamellae under longer toe 9-15 (11.4).

Additional material

North-west Division (W.A.): 17 km NE of Carnarvon (41208); Callagiddy (37648, 39767, 40667-8); Woodleigh (48008-9, 49932-6); Overlander Road House (44528); Meeberrie (51096).

Lerista connivens petersoni subsp. nov.

Holotype

R46197 in Western Australian Museum, collected by Mr M. Peterson in June 1973 at Yinnietharra, W.A., in 24°39'S, 116°09'E.



Fig. 1: Paratype of *Lerista connivens petersoni*.

Diagnosis

Moderately large and stout *Lerista* with digits 0 + 2, forelimb groove, eyelid immovable (i.e. large transparent disc surrounded by a series of granules), dark upper lateral stripe, and wide vertebral stripe. Distinguishable from *L. c. connivens* by immovable (rather than movable) eyelid, more numerous nuchals and subdigital lamellae, slightly longer hindleg, and occurrence of individuals with frontoparietals and interparietal free.

Distinguishable from *L. nichollsi* by greater size, two loreals (rather than one), and wider, more ragged-edged vertebral stripe.

Distribution

Mid-western interior of Western Australia, in the Gascoyne drainage.

Description

Snout-vent length (mm): 67.5-69. Length of appendages etc. (% SVL): hindleg 16-17; snout to forelimb groove 21-22.

Nasals forming a short to moderately long median suture. Prefrontals widely separated. In holotype frontoparietals narrowly separated, much smaller than interparietal; in paratype frontoparietals and interparietal fused (as in *L. c. connivens* and *L. nichollsi*). Nuchals 2-3. Supraoculars 3, first two contacting frontal. Supraciliaries 1 + 2 or 4. Upper labials 6. Upper secondary temporal much the largest, lower secondary much the smallest (when not fused to last labial). Midbody scale rows 20-22. Lamellae under longer toe 12.

Head, vertebral stripe and tail greyish brown; vertebral stripe wider than whitish laterodorsal strip of ground colour and enclosing four series of dark brown spots. Dark brown upper lateral stripe from nasal or lores back through orbit to tail. Upper labials barred with dark brown. Lower surface whitish except for grey dots on tail.

Remarks

Named after the collector of the holotype, Magnus Peterson, in appreciation of the numerous reptiles he has donated to this Museum. The paratype was collected by T.M.S. Hanlon in leaf litter on 22 December 1975; it was photographed in life (Fig. 1) by R.E. Johnstone.

Paratype

North-west Division (W.A.): Yinnietharra (51378).

Lerista bipes (Fischer)

Additional localities

Kimberley Division (W.A.): Manning Creek; Coulomb Point; Nita Downs; Granny Soak, Gardiner Range.

North-west Division (W.A.): Monte Bello Is (Trimouille I.); Dampier Archipelago (Gidley I., Kendrew I.); Point Samson.

Eastern Division (W.A.): 119 km E of Talawana; Gary Junction; 5 km S of Charles Knob (25°06'S, 124°59'E); near Miller Soak (28°10'S, 124°12'E).

Lerista labialis Storr

Additional localities

Eastern Division (W.A.): Cavenagh Range; Shell Lake (29°15'S, 127°05'E).

Lerista praepedita (Boulenger)

Additional localities

North-west Division (W.A.): Dirk Hartog I.; near Denham.

South-west Division (W.A.): Lockwood Springs; Port Gregory; Green Head; 5 km W of Padbury (30°10'S, 115°04'E); 8 km NE of Jurien Bay; Guilderton; suburbs of Perth (Sorrento, Doubleview, Wembley Downs, Balga, Dianella).

Lerista apoda sp. nov.

Holotype

R52163 in Western Australian Museum, collected by Dr B.R. Wilson and Mrs S.M. Slack-Smith on 5 September 1975 at Cygnet Bay, Western Australia, in 16°26'S, 123°01'E.

Diagnosis

Very slender *Lerista* with no trace of legs (including forelimb groove); eye very small and located under a transparent scale; snout flat, sharp and protruding well beyond mouth; tail much shorter than body and terminating abruptly and obtusely (as in Typhlopidae).

Distribution

Dampier Land, west Kimberley.

Description

Snout-vent length (mm): holotype 70.5, paratype 77. Length of tail (% SVL): holotype 56, paratype 20.

Nasals very large, forming a moderately long suture. No prefrontals. Frontonasal and frontal much wider than long. Frontoparietals and interparietal fused into a large triangular shield. Parietals long and narrow, in

short contact. No nuchals. Two apically pointed scales between frontal and ocular. One loreal (the only scale between nasal and ocular). One postocular. Temporals 3, upper secondary a little larger than primary, lower secondary much the smallest. Upper labials 4. Ear aperture minute (as in all *Lerista*). Midbody scale rows 16.

Upper surface whitish with a few faint brown blotches on head and four series of faint brown dots along back and tail. Lateral and lower surfaces dark brown, obscurely spotted with still darker brown, except for whitish under snout, lips, chin, throat and preanal scales, and for anterior half of tail (which is whitish, sparsely spotted with brown).

Remarks

At first glance these specimens, especially the extremely short-tailed paratype, look more like an *Aprasia* than a skink. Degeneration of the eye has proceeded beyond that in *Aprasia* and seems to be approaching the condition in blind-snakes (Typhlopidae). Nevertheless, *apoda* is very much a *Lerista*. Indeed it fits easily into the *bipes* group, where some of its peculiarities are foreshadowed in *L. praepedita*.

The holotype was found when its collectors were searching for molluscs under small limestone rocks half buried in leaf litter; the lizard would not have been more than a centimetre or two below the surface of the calcareous sand (B.R. Wilson, *pers. comm.*). The paratype was collected by W.H. Butler in pindan country in winter 1971.

Paratype

Kimberley Division (W.A.): Coulomb Point (40267).

REFERENCE

- STORR, G.M. (1972). The genus *Lerista* (Lacertilia, Scincidae) in Western Australia. *J. Proc. R. Soc. West. Aust.* 54: 59-75.